

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

### **Listing of Claims:**

- 1           1.       (previously presented) A point assembly for an applicator, comprising :  
2                   a housing having a back end and a tip end with a tip opening;  
3                   a tip ball positioned in said tip end of said housing and sized to close said tip  
4 end opening when positioned against said tip opening;  
5                   a biasing element positioned to bias said tip ball toward said tip opening; and  
6                   a ball pusher positioned between said biasing element and said tip ball and  
7 including a support element and a contact element extending from said support element and  
8 having a shape adapted to conform to the shape of the tip ball ;  
9                   wherein  
10                  said support element has a front face and a rear face;  
11                  said contact element extends from said front face;  
12                  said contact element has a pushing end contacting said tip ball designed and  
13 configured to conform to the shape of said tip ball;  
14                  said rear face faces said biasing element;  
15                  said support element has a cross-sectional dimension and said contact element  
16 has a cross-sectional dimension smaller than said support element cross-sectional dimension;  
17 and  
18                  said support element does not contact said biasing element in a lateral  
19 direction.
- 1           2.       (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said contact element extends  
2 outwardly from a center portion of said front face of said support element.
- 1           3.       (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein :  
2                   said housing has an inner barrel having a varied cross-sectional shape;  
3                   said inner barrel has at least a front portion, a middle portion, and a back  
4 portion;  
5                   said front portion is substantially ball-shaped and includes a passageway to  
6 said middle portion;

7                   said middle portion is outwardly cone-shaped with a narrow section adjacent  
8   said front portion and a wide section associated with said back portion;  
9                   said back portion is substantially cylindrical;  
10                  said tip ball is positioned in said front portion;  
11                  said biasing element and said support element are positioned in said back  
12   portion; and  
13                  said contact element extends through said middle portion to meet said tip ball  
14   positioned in said front portion.

1           4.       (original) The point assembly of claim 3, wherein said support element is  
2   configured and dimensioned for insignificant lateral movement within said barrel of the point  
3   assembly.

1           5.       (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein:  
2                   said housing has an inner barrel in which said tip ball, said biasing element,  
3   and said ball pusher are positioned;  
4                   said support element is substantially cylindrical and said inner barrel has a  
5   cylindrical interior wall; and  
6                   said support element has a diameter selected to allow said support element to  
7   slide within said cylindrical interior wall of said barrel without significant lateral movement.

1           6.       (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said contact element of said  
2   ball pusher is formed integrally with said support element of said ball pusher.

1           7.       (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said ball pusher is formed of  
2   one of metal, plastic, or glass.

1           8.       (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said ball pusher has a low  
2   friction against said tip ball.

1           9.       (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said applicator is a writing  
2   instrument.

1           10.      (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said support element  
2   includes at least one cut-out portion extending therethrough between said front face and said

3 rear face of said support element for allowing a substance to flow through said cut-out  
4 portions for exit through said tip opening.

1 11. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said ball pusher is formed  
2 separately from said biasing element.

1 12. (original) The point assembly of claim 1, wherein said biasing element is a  
2 helical spring.

1 13. (original) A ball pusher for positioning in the point assembly of an applicator,  
2 said point assembly having a tip opening in which a tip ball is positioned, said tip ball being  
3 biased against the tip opening by a biasing element, wherein said ball pusher comprises:

4 a support element having a front face, a rear face, and a cross-sectional  
5 dimension, said rear face of said support element being configured for facing the biasing  
6 element in the point assembly of the applicator; and

7 a contact element extending from said front face of said support element, said  
8 contact element being configured for contacting the tip ball and having a shape adapted to  
9 conform to the shape of the tip ball positioned at the tip opening and for pushing the tip ball  
10 against the tip opening, said contact element having a cross-sectional dimension smaller than  
11 said support element cross-sectional dimension;

12 wherein:

13 said support element does not contact said biasing element in a lateral  
14 direction; and

15 said contact element has a pushing end contacting said tip ball designed and  
16 configured to the shape of said tip ball.

1 14. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said support element has at  
2 least one cut-out portion extending from said front face to said rear face.

1 15. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said contact element is  
2 substantially cylindrical.

1 16. (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said contact element is formed  
2 integrally with said support element.

1           17.     (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said ball pusher is formed of  
2     one of metal, plastic, or glass.

1           18.     (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said contact element extends  
2     from the center of said support element.

1           19.     (original) The ball pusher of claim 13, wherein said contact element is  
2     perpendicular to said support element.

1           20.-23. (canceled)